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IN THE UNITED STATES PATENT AND TRADEMARK OFFICE

In re Application of:

Yurimichi DAIROKU et al.

Group Art Unit: 1713

Serial No.: 09/917,642

Filed: July 31, 2001

For: WATER-ABSORBENT, HYDROPOLYMER,
PROCESS FOR PRODUCING THEM,
AND USES OF THEM

RESPONSE TO RESTRICTION REQUIREMENT

Commissioner for Patents
P.O. Box 1450
Alexandria, VA 22313-1450

Sir:

This is in response to the May 2, 2003 Office Action, which time for response is set to expire August 2, 2003.

In the Action, the Examiner has made a 19-way restriction requirement. In response, Applicants provisionally elect the Group 3, including claim 3, directed to a process for producing a water-absorbent resin. This election is made with traverse.

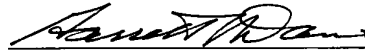
The Action contends that the invention of Group 1 and 19 are mutually exclusive species and that the inventions of Groups 2-18 are unrelated to the inventions of Group 1 and 19. However, Group 1 includes claim 1 which is directed to a process of producing a water-absorbent resin. Groups 2-18 are also directed to a process for producing a water-absorbent resin. Thus, the process of Group 1 is related to the processes of Groups 2-18.

The Action also contends that each of the inventions are distinct and have acquired a separate status in the art as shown by the different classification. However, each of Group 1-16

are identified as being classified in class 526, subclass 72. Thus, the inventions are not classified differently as suggested in the Action. Applicants submit that the Action fails to present a basis for the position that claims 1-16 are sufficiently distinct to restrict the application to a single claim. Furthermore, restricting the application to a single process claim is unduly restrictive and places an unreasonable burden on the Applicants.

In view of the above, Applicants request the restriction be withdrawn. Prompt and favorable examination is requested.

Respectfully submitted,



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Dated: June 30, 2003